

# LESSON 1

## The Hebrew Alphabet

The Hebrew Alphabet is something that all students should commit to memory. Later, as the Lessons progress, it will become an invaluable tool for opening up previously closed levels of documentation and insight for those who know how to apply it as a Key. The shape, sound, and numerical value of each letter of the Hebrew Alphabet will be extremely important throughout this study course. An easy method of learning the Hebrew Alphabet is to study a letter each day, and commit its particular characteristics to memory.

These letters are more than letters. They are, in fact, symbols which attract forces that the student can start to manipulate and control by simply visualizing each letter. The method of how to utilize the letters is covered in latter lessons, but the letters' importance can hardly be over-emphasized. They will be used as forces on Talismatic and Invocational work, and a great many other things. They are the first hurdle the student will have to get over before advancing to the next stage of the course.

From a psychological point of view, each Hebrew letter can affect the psyche in a different way when meditated upon, for these are real potencies of forces. In the Golden Dawn of the last century, one of the first requirements a student had to do was to memorize the Hebrew alphabet. The following table is given as a reference for work in future lessons.

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## The Hebrew Alphabet and Basic Correspondences

Name	Letter	Value	Meaning	Power	Astrological Association
Aleph	א	1	Ox	A	△
Beth	ב	2	House	B, V	♀
Gimel	ג	3	Camel	G, Gh	☽
Daleth	ד	4	Door	D, Db	♀
He	ה	5	Window	H	Τ
Vau	ו	6	Pin, Hook	O, U, V	♀
Zain	ז	7	Sword, Armor	Z	☽
Cheth	ח	8	Fence, Enclosure	Ch	¤
Teth	ט	9	Snake	T	Ω
Yod	י	10	Hand	I, Y	₪
Kaph	כ	20	Fist	K, Kh	፩
Lamed	ל	30	Ox Goad	L	Ω
Mem	מ	40	Water	M	▽
Nun	נ	50	Fish	N	₪
Samekh	ס	60	Prop	S	↗
Ayin	ע	70	Eye	Aa, Ngh	₪
Pe	פ	80	Mouth	P, Ph	♂
Tzaddi	צ	90	Fish-hook	Tz	=
Qoph	ק	100	Ear, Back of Head	Q	＊
Resh	ר	200	Head	R	⊙
Shin	ש	300	Tooth	S, Sh	△
Tau	ת	400	Cross	T, Th	ḥ

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## Table of Finals

Name	Letter	Value	Meaning	Power	Astrological Association
Kaph	ת	500	Fist	K, Kh	♀
Mem	ם	600	Water	M	▽
Nun	נ	700	Fish	N	♏
Pe	פ	800	Mouth	P, Ph	♂
Tzaddi	צ	900	Fish-hook	Tz	=

The lecture given below was written by Mrs. Felkin (her Order Motto was Maim Choth). This lecture was given out in the New Zealand Order, and thou written over 70 years ago, loses none of its potency today.

**THE HEBREW ALPHABET**  
by M.C.

In giving our students the Hebrew Alphabet to study, we are taking them back to the foundations of the intellectual tradition of the present day. To understand this, it is necessary for us to glance back to the beginning of human history. We have reason to believe that humanity in its present form was evolved on the "Antedeluvian" continent of Atlantis, and that at the submergence of this continent, off-shoots of their civilization survived in those races which we know as the Egyptian, the Caucasian, and the Celtic. They were also the forerunners of the Mongolians. Here, then, we have those primitive races who first reduced the spoken word to the written symbol. Celtic origins are still veiled in obscurity, but the remaining three civilizations reveal themselves to patient investigation of the archaeologist and etymologist as unbroken streams descending and branching out in today's languages. With the Mongolian tongues, we have no concern. They are alien alike in sound, construction, and written form. But from the Sanscrit of the Caucasian, and the Egyptian are derived the modern tongues of the greater part of present civilizations.

There can be but little doubt that when the wandering tribes of the Hebrews first settled in Egypt they had practically no written language. We are told they spent 400 years in the land of Goshen; approximately as long as from the time of Queen Elizabeth the First to present day. When they first settled in the land of Goshen on the Eastern side of the Nile, there were 70 people, including women and children. When they fled, four centuries later, their number is said to have been over six hundred thousand. It is reasonable to conclude that in that interval, although they remained separate from the natives of the country, they imbibed most of the natives' customs and as much as possible of their language and learning. Moses, their leader, was brought up by the Egyptian Priests and initiated into their Mysteries. He was familiar with their system of hieroglyphics and there can be little doubt that when he set himself the stupendous task of recording the history of Israel, he availed himself of both the form of writing and much of the Cosmogony which he had acquired in his Temple training. By this means he was able to preserve the inner tradition while, at the same time, presenting an exoteric history. It is a peculiarity of the genius of both the Egyptian Hieroglyphics and Hebrew writing that they are capable of a three-fold interpretation: literal, symbolic, and spiritual.

In studying the actual Hebrew letters as we now possess them, we must, of course, admit that they have undergone considerable modification since Moses' days; the most important being their approximation to the Chaldean (owing to the exile). From the Chaldean was also borrowed the vocalization system by means of points placed above, below, or within a letter. Nevertheless, the hieroglyphic idea is retained in that each letter presents not only a sound, but also an object, and the name of the letter is also the name of that object: hence the list which you were given in the First Knowledge Lecture. That is to say —

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**ALEPH** (Arabic: **ALIF**), not only means the letter A or E (or more accurately, the opening of the mouth to make that sound), it also is the name of an Ox. The word **BETH** is not only the letter B or V, but it also is the name of a House.

Thee is another thing you have to bear in mind. In all ancient languages, there was only one system of notation for both sound and for numerals. Thus each letter is also a number, and each word has a numerical value equal to the sum of its letters. **ל** is not only the sound **EL** or **AL**, and a Divine Name, it is also  $30 + 1 = 31$ .

Moreover, a language like Hebrew had comparatively few words. Each word had numerous shades of meaning, indicated either by the context, or by inflection. Each individual letter had its own essential meaning also. It follows that the word was the sum of, or modification of, those meanings; just as numerically it was the sum of those individual numbers. Thus **ל**, which signifies the number 31, is formed from **ל**, the Sign of Power, and **ל** the Sign of Extension. Its Spiritual meaning is therefore "Extended Power," and hence God, the Power extended over all. Used in a restricted or materialized sense, it may be translated as towards, against, or upon. The same letters reversed, **ל**, Spiritually represent the prolongation of movement to infinity. Translated to a lower Plane, this becomes negative and may be rendered as no or not.

Let us now consider the abstract symbolism of each of the 22 Hebrew letters:

**א** is the Sign of Power, stability, or unity. It represents mankind as Ruler of the Earth. Aleph = an Ox.

**ב** is Interior Action. It represents virility, an interior, or a dwelling place. Beth = a House.

Uniting these two, **א** and **ב**, one has: **בָּא** or **אָבָּא**, a Father.

**ג** is the Sign of Organic Development. Hence a throat, or a canal which organizes or controls the inflexion of sound; a glass of water. Gimel = a Camel.

**ד** is the Sign of Abundance from Division. Divisible nature, the source of physical existence; the Breast, the source of nourishment. Daleth = a Door, an Entrance, or an Exit.

**ה** merits special attention. It is the symbol of Universal Life — the Breath. It may be translated as either E or H, and is closely akin to **ו** in meaning as well as in form. It is frequently used as an article, and may be translated as the, this, that, or of. In this aspect, it is used as a prefix or as a suffix. When united with a vowel sound, it forms the principal Deity Names, and

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in this respect indicates an abstraction which no modern language can render adequately. Thus הָיָה is Absolute Life, Eternal, Immutable; אֲהָיָה can be adumbrated only as That Which Is — Was — Will Be. It is the root of the verb "to be"; to exist, and is used to denote the source of human life in the Name הָיָה, which we translate as **EVE**, but which may also be given as **HUA** — the third person singular of the verb "to be", or simply as He. When the significant ' is added, it becomes Tetragrammaton, יהוה, the Inviolable Name which must not be taken in vain, and which was intoned only by the High Priest upon entering the Holy of Holies. Even today, no orthodox Jew attempts to utter it.

- 1 is equivalent to O, U, or V. It is therefore convenient to use the point to indicate the sound, since its symbolism differs widely according to its pronunciation. As a V, ה is used as a conjunction, and is placed at the beginning of a word. It may be translated as and, also, thus, then, or afterwards; but it links words together more intimately than any of these. Used as a vowel, ה = O, U, or OU. It is then a Sign of Action and has the peculiarity of transforming a verb from present to past tense, or from past to future tense. In this respects it no longer represents the junction of two things (as a hook and an eye; a knot; a link), it rather is the symbol of light, sound, air, or wind. Hence רוח = RUACH = the wind, breath, or soul, because ה = movement; ה = life, and ה in their midst gives the peculiar human character to the word indicating expansion, or inspiration.
- 2 is the hissing sound of something passing through the air, hence a sword or arrow; a javelin or a spear. It also denotes the refraction of light, suggesting the dazzling appearance of a ray of light falling on polished metal. It may be translated as Z, C, or S.
- 3 is closely allied to ה in both form and significance. Because it is more closed in form, it is more guttural in sound, and of a material connotation. It signifies life, but on a lower Plane. It implies effort, labor, or care. In a concrete example, it indicates a field — an enclosure upon which labor must be expended.
- 4 hieroglyphically shows the coiled Serpent protecting her eggs; hence the universal tradition of the Serpent guarding treasure. From that we get the idea of a shield, shelter, or a roof, protecting a man's family as the Serpent protects her eggs. Finally, we have a haven, refuge, or a goal.
- 5 is another symbol of deep significance. The hieroglyphic interpretation is that of the hand. But it is a hand held out in action; thus a symbol of creation. It is the symbol of a flame detached from any material base, free; the leaping creative impulse. By a natural transition we get the phallic symbol of Creative Power. On the abstract Spiritual Plane, we have the

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Divine Creator. This letter thus transmutes יהוה, the feminine source of life, into י'הוה, the Ineffable Supreme.

- כ hieroglyphically represents the closed or half-closed hand, a fist; hence a hollow; therefore a receptacle; the power of assimilation, reflection, and mediation. It forms a link between ה, the Sign of Manifest Life, and ו, the Sign of Organization, and carries in itself something of the symbolism of both of these. Used as an article or preposition, it may be translated as similar or according to. Vocalized by כ, it signifies כ, which equals because, for, then, and when.
- ל suggests in a material sense any extension; the outstretched arm of man; the unfolded wing of a bird; hence the further symbolism of a whip-lash or an ox-goad. When these interpretations are raised to the Spiritual Plane, we perceive at once how significant this letter becomes. אל, therefore, represents an extension of power — omnipotence. Hence אלhim, ELOHIM, is the extension of the Power of Life to the nth degree; that aspect of the Divine which is capable of creating without effort. Conversely, לא signifies an indefinite and therefore unknown and incalculable quantity, which brought down from the abstract to the concrete becomes negation, no, and not.
- מ is the Sign of Passive or Plastic Action; the genuine protective aspect of Creative Power. Vocalized as מים, it signifies water, always used in the plural since מ final is collective as water is the condensation of moisture. With the letter מ prefixed, we have מים, SHAMAIM, the Heavens, the Ethereal Water or atmosphere. Used as an article or a prefix, מ may be rendered as from, out of, with, or among. Hieroglyphically, we may say that מ indicates rough water, or sea waves; while מ (final) suggests rather still, calm water; silence, or peace.
- ב is the image of Produced or Reflected Existence; offspring, fruit, a child. It hieroglyphically represents a fish, the inhabitant of water. Joined to כ, the Sign of Interior Action, it becomes בן, BEN, a son. This is more clearly defined when we realize that ב (final) is augmentative and emphasizes the individuality. ב at the beginning of a word suggests passive action, contemplation folded in upon itself; ב at the end of a word is the converse: unfolding. Thus ב represents inspiration, prophecy, or ecstasy. From this is derived נביא — a prophet.
- ד represents the development of the hissing sound of ד, so hieroglyphically it is the duplication; the duplicate link forming a prop, not merely joining, but supporting. It is the image of all circular and spiral movement; possibly a deduction from the peculiar movement of the Serpent.

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γ hieroglyphically signifies an eye, and here we find one of the most curious and eurdite survivals of occult knowledge. Superficially, there seems to be but little likeness between the letter and the symbol. Considering it more carefully, we find that it is indeed an extraordinary glyph of the organs of vision. Externally, we have two eyes, ", but inside our head lies a small body, one (or rather two closely connected) of the so-called "ductless glands" of modern physiology — the pineal and pituitary glands. These glands are connected to the external eyes by delicate nerves. When the external eyes are exercised in certain methods, they awake a definite response in the internal glands — the "Third Eye" of legend. The complete γ is an exact counterpart of the complete organism, and signifies the whole visual apparatus. One of the secondary results is the reaction upon our general muscular system.

Phonetically, γ represents the opening of the glottis (in the throat) to make a guttural sound. It is therefore transliterated as aa, oo, wh, or ng. It symbolizes interior hollow sounds or noises, and connotes materialism or emptiness, sometimes falsity or perversity. It is the physical aspect of 'ι, and when used as a consonant almost always has an evil implication.

δ is a hieroglyph of the open mouth, naturally symbolizing speech. It is transliterated either as p, in which case it closely resembles ρ in meaning as well as in form, or as ph, in which case it approximates rather the meaning of ι.

γ represents all ideas of severance or solution. It concretely represents a hook by which something is caught or ended. In sound, it falls into the same group as ι and η, though it is harder and more abrupt. Placed at the beginning of words, it indicates the movement which carries us on towards an end; placed at the end of a word as γ (final), it indicates the end accomplished. On a higher Plane, it represents a refuge for man.

ρ is another guttural, and like γ, suggests materialistic tendencies. Hieroglyphically, it represents an ear. Symbolically, it becomes an implement or instrument by which man may accomplish an act or defend himself. It marks at once force and restraint. It is significant of repression and decision. In sound it is the harder and more guttural sound of δ. Abstractly, we may trace a regular succession of descent and development. Thus η = Universal Life, Pure Being; η = Life of Nature, Manifest Existence; δ = Assimilated Life hiding Natural Form; and ρ = Material Existence giving the Means of Form.

τ is the Sign of Movement par excellence. Hieroglyphically, it is the head of

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man רֶשֶׁת, **RESH**, which directs the movements of his whole body, a captain, or by a slight alteration in focus, the initiative movement which predicates life and ultimate form; the culminating point of all things. Hence רָאשֵׁת הַגִּלְגָּלִים, **RASHIT HA-GILGALIM**, the vortex, the beginning of Primeval Movement, the Sphere of the Elements. It is the center unfolding to the circumference; the Creative Elemental Fire; the renewal of all by movement; the perpetual vibrations of ions building up matter. Hence אֹור, **AUR**, fire, action, contrasted with אַשׁ, **ASH**, potential fire.

- ¶ is said to represent the teeth, by which its sound is produced. It completes the symbolism of ☽ and ☿, and is in a sense bound to them. For as ☽ = the arrow, and ☿ = the bowstring, so ☽ symbolizes the bow itself. Thus we are told that the three Paths on the Tree of Life form ☽, **QUESHETH**, the bow, the material sign of reciprocity between God and man. ☽ is the symbol of movement and duration. Used as a prefix, it communicates a double power of movement and of conjunction. It may be pronounced either ss, or as sh, and usually has a point above it to indicate which sound is to be used: ☽ = ss; and ☽ = sh. Geometrically, it represents the semi-arc of a circle, whereas ☽ is the straight forward movement of a radius, and ☿ is a spiral. We find by analysis, that the Divine Name, ☽, **SHADDAI**, represents the over-arching heavens protecting the secundity and abundance of nature — hence Providence.
- ¶ is the last letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and is a glyph of the Cross; the name being still retained to indicate the ancient form of the cross — the Tau, sacred to **THOOTH**. It is indeed probable that the letter was originally written as the Tau Cross, and gradually elaborated to distinguish it from ☽. It is the Sign of Reciprocity, of that which is mutual, interchanging, and sympathetic. Joined to the first letter of the alphabet, it indicates ☽, **ATH**, the Essence; the inmost Self of a thing or a person. In this form, it is repeatedly used by Moses as a prefix in his account of Creation to indicate that he is not describing a material or individual, but an essential process which developed on a higher Plane preliminary to any physical manifestation.

In analyzing the various names occurring in the Knowledge Lectures and elsewhere, it must be remembered that each letter modifies as well as emphasizes the others; that the meaning of the whole word is the combination, not the simple addition of its constituents. An intelligent appreciation of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet will go far towards helping us gain an insight not only into the Hebrew, but also into all other languages, since every superstructure must conform to its foundations. I may add that each letter has also been attributed to a portion of the human body, but as Astrology has accepted this system with regards to the Zodiacal and Planetary Signs, it is better not to confuse the issue by dwelling upon this classification. Rather let us conclude with the saying of the

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Rabbi — "In the Beginning GOD took the 22 letters, and with them He formed, combined, and designed all that was made."

## LESSON 2

### Hebrew Calligraphy

Israel Regardie was very adamant that all students who study the Golden Dawn System should also study Hebrew Calligraphy. Therefore, to comply with his wishes it has been included as this Lesson. The importance of the Hebrew letters was discussed in Lesson 1, and this point cannot be over emphasized enough before continuing. Re-read Lesson 1, and hold in mind the comments on how the Hebrew letters can be used when you begin to practice them.

One of the most important aspects of understanding the Hebrew alphabet is to know how to draw the letters. Each letter, if drawn correctly, becomes a meditative exercise in itself, and also promotes a better understanding of its nature. The letters should first be drawn in the approximate size given in the step-by-step format with either a felt pen, fountain pen, or a brush. Once the shape of each letter has been practiced enough so that you can do each letter with ease, progress to the next step: drawing each letter between lines in a more suitable size to writing. (Practice sheets are provided at the end of this Lesson for this.) This exercise is important because it gives us the positioning of each letter on a line in relation to its neighbor. Pertinent points to look for are the letters whose top or bottom go beyond the boundary of the lines.

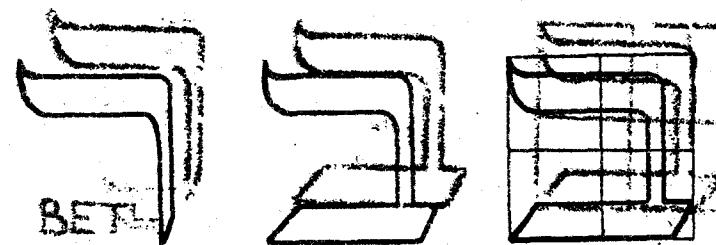
Vowel points have not been included in this Lesson since they were introduced into the Hebrew alphabet at a late stage of its development, but for those interested in taking up the study of Hebrew grammar (which is not essential for this course, but is definitely recommended), there are a number of fine books available on the subject. One of the most inexpensive and most fundamental is *Teach Yourself Biblical Hebrew*, by R.K. Harrison.

From Lesson 1, you have seen how each Hebrew letter has a numerical value, a name, a description, an English letter, and Astrological or Elemental association attributed to it. Clarification of these attributes are covered within the Lessons of this course. For example, the numerical value is covered in depth in the Lessons dealing with Gematria, Notariqon, and Temura which follow. The student must realize that each Lesson is a small piece of a vast jigsaw puzzle, and going through the Lessons enables you to put the puzzle together in your understanding.

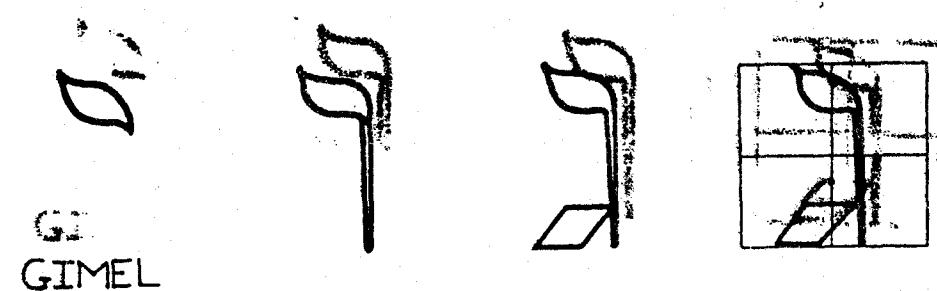
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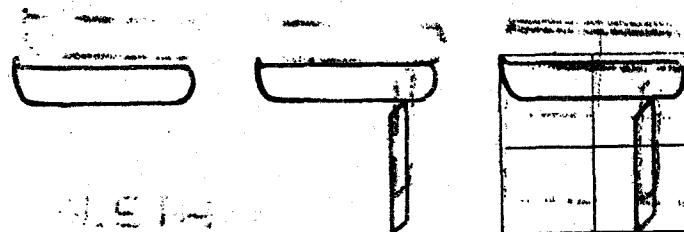
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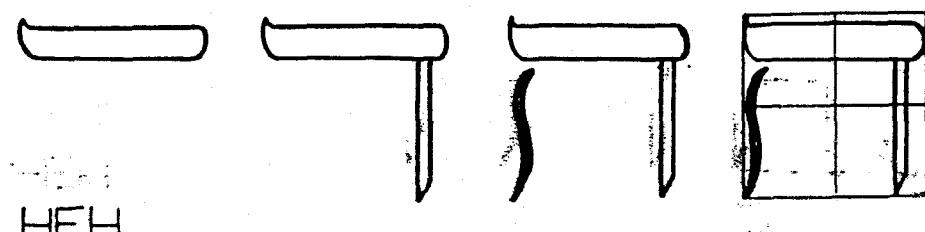
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BETH



GIMEL  
GIMEL

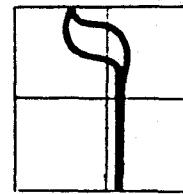


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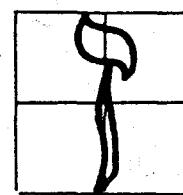


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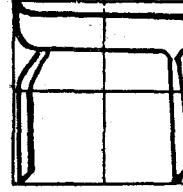
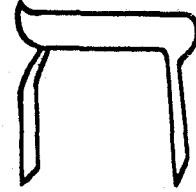
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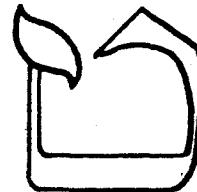
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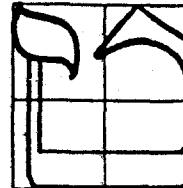
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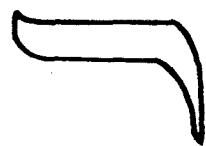
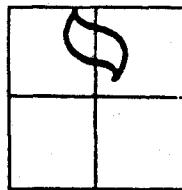
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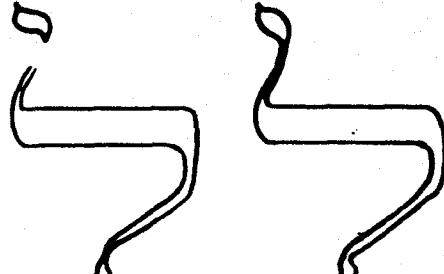
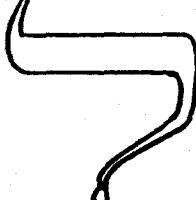
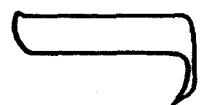
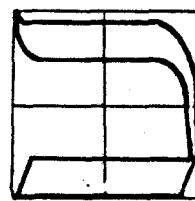
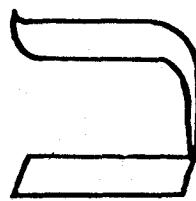
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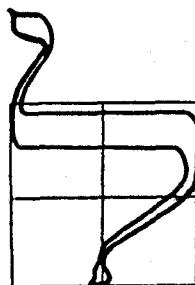
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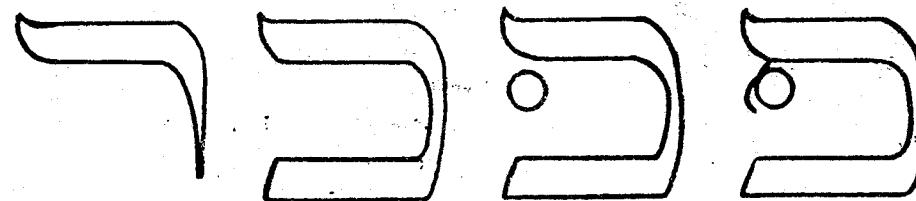
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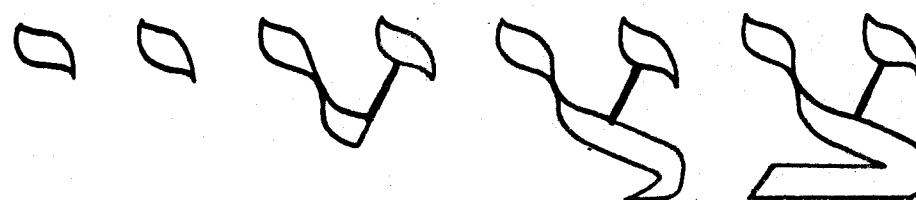
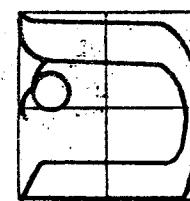
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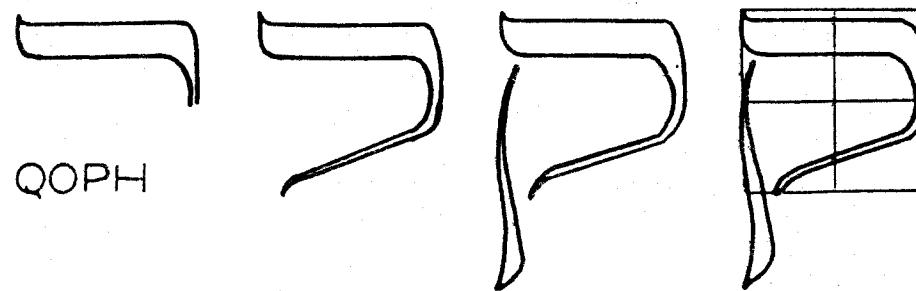
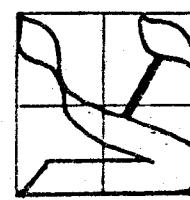
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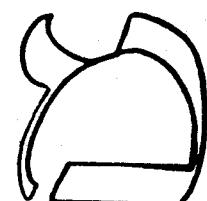
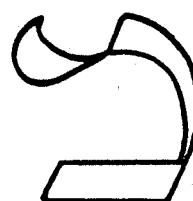
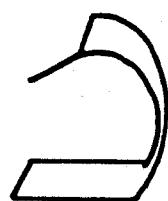


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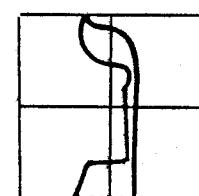
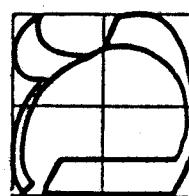


QOPH

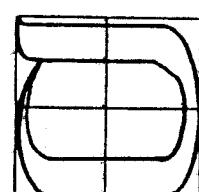
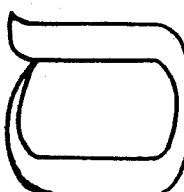
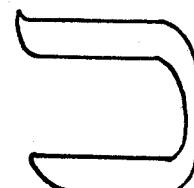
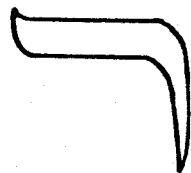
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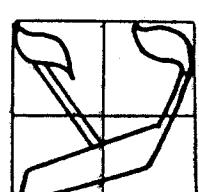
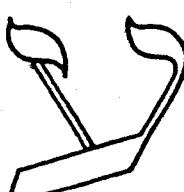
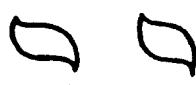
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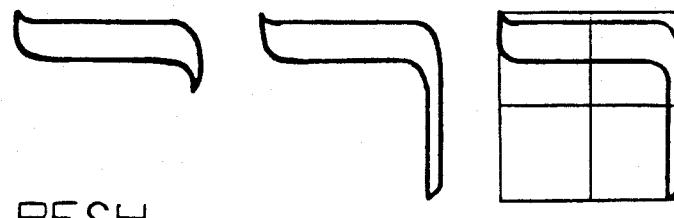


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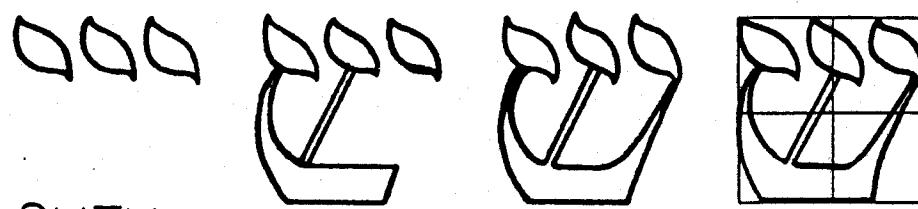


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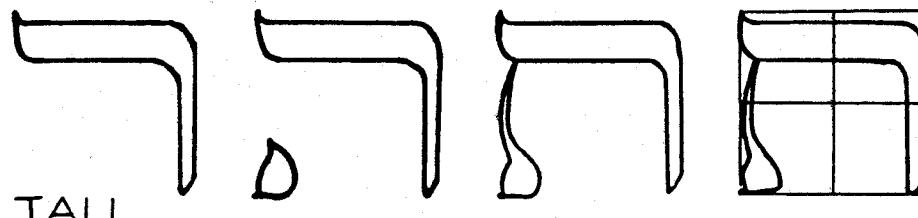
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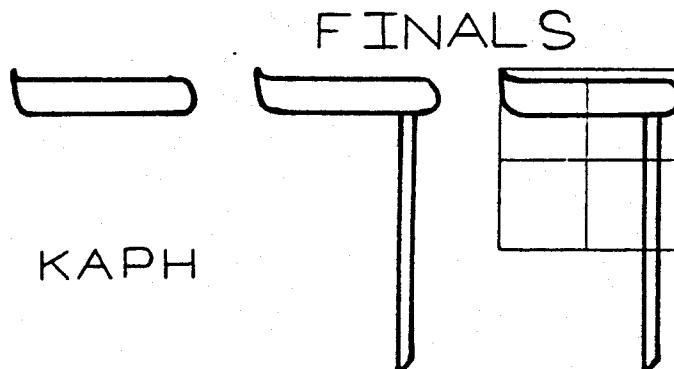
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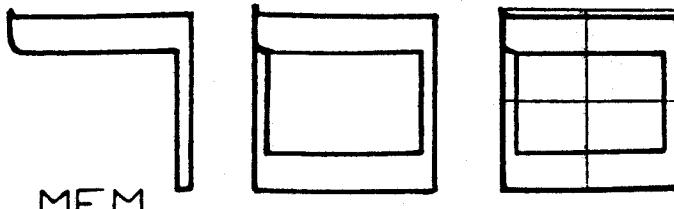
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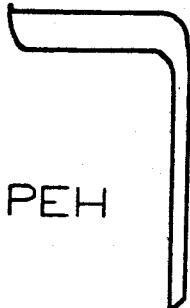
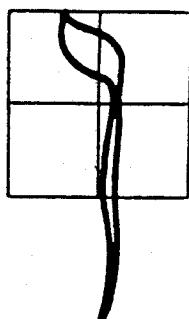


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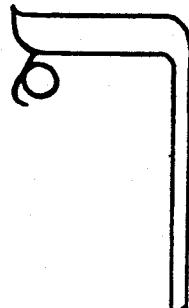
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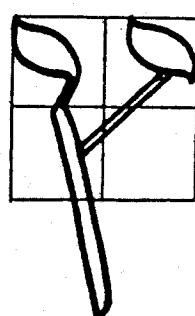
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Artistic License as been taken in the rendition of the Hebrew Calligraphy in this text. For further examples of Hebrew Calligraphy, see the *Siddur Tehillat Hashem*.

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PRACTICE SHEETS

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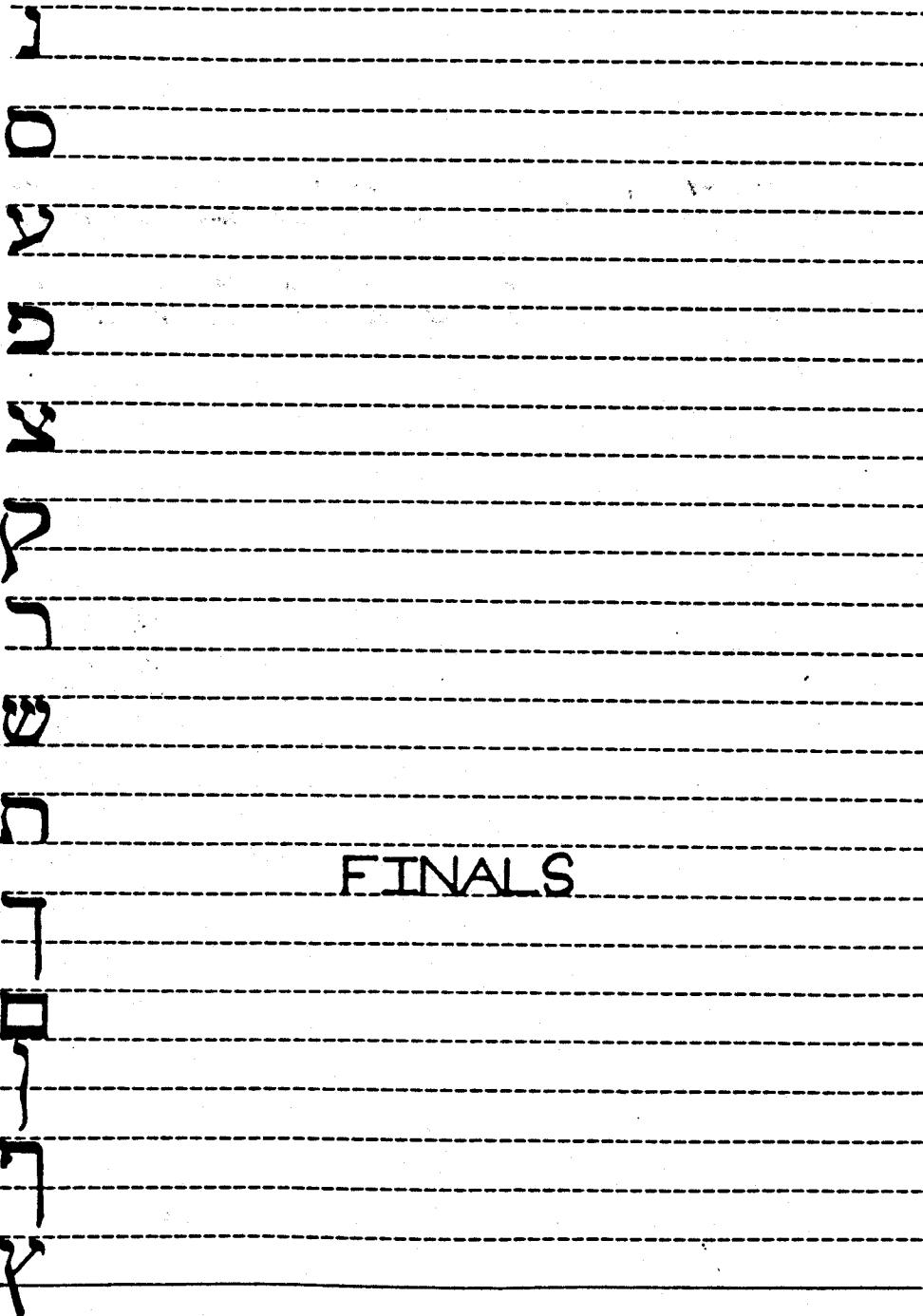
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### LESSON 3

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE KABBALAH

The Kabbalah is an esoteric form of teaching and philosophy that is to a certain extent skeletal in format but when applied to a 10 stage glyph called the Tree of Life it gives a breakdown by virtue of association to almost any given situation. One can, by studying the Kabbalah, find where and when one is at a certain point in any circumstance, and the nature of the obstacles one has to overcome to arrive at the conclusion of a project. It provides a clear blueprint or path for esoteric studies.

In the 19th century book called the Cannon, it's author gives the following excellent analysis of the Kabbalah:

"The Cabalistic theology, representing the endless reasoning of countless generation of ingenious men, in the epitome of mans first efforts to grasp the problems connected with the cause and continuance of life, the inscrutable mystery which baffled the understanding of all inquires alike. They reasoned concerning all phenomena of existence by their analogy to human creation, and it was supposed that the universal creation took place after the manner of human creation, and the generative attributes of a man and a woman were those of god and the universe, and finally that all the bodily functions of a human being and their counterpart in the macrocosm or greater world."

The theoretical system based upon these ideas constituted, the secret doctrine, which was taught orally, and never written. All the old Canonical writings are an exposition of its teachings, but these works are composed, so that only those persons, who are instructed in the rules of the hidden wisdom could discover their meaning."

The above statement adequately summarises the essence of Kabbalistic teachings. As to the actual spelling of the word Kabbalah there may be some confusion as it has been through the centuries spelt a number of different ways. A popular method is to take it from the Hebrew root QBL which means to receive and is spelt Qabalah which has been more or less adopted as the standard method of spelling it. Other variations of the words are Cabala, Caballa, Kabbala, Kabala and Gabbalah to name but a few. Ultimately though it still comes down towards personal preference which for the duration of this course is spelt Kabbalah which has possibly a more reliable etymological base than any of the above origins of the word.

"Commonly the derivation (of the word Kabbalah) is traced to the Hebrew word Qebil, meaning to receive, collect, and this is translated tradition. This seems to us to be somewhat forced and inexact. We believe the Hebrew word Kabbale to be of Chaldean-Egyptian origin, signifying occult science or doctrine.

The Egyptian root Khepp, Khop or Kheb, Khob; in Hebrew, gab, Kheb or Khebet, means hide, enclose, and Al or Ol in Egyptian

signifies take: so that the word would mean a science taken from hidden principles". (F.S. Contancin, Encycl. du XIIe Siecle)

The main point to concern ourselves with is the fact that the word Kabbalah existed in oral terms for over a thousand years and its spelling is in fact an after thought (whatever the method utilised) to describe a great method of spiritual teaching.

It must be clearer by now that the Kabbalah is in fact a tool to unlock the secrets of the scriptures of the Old Testament by showing them in a completely new light. Taking this further to great Kabbalistic books like the Zohar shows us that it is a progression form of teaching that each generation adds to. In its original form the Kabbalah was a disjointed record of teachings from various Rabbi through the ages which has survived in a type of cryptic question and answer format. Years after these early Kabbalistic doctrines had been written, countless scholars began to formulate a new opinion of the old manuscripts and the teachings of the Kabbalah began to establish themselves in a ten stage glyph called the Tree of Life. Each of these ten stages or Sephiroth (as they became known as) showed growth from a single cell into a full unit of ten. Interconnecting each of these Sephiroth are twenty two paths (often associated to the twenty two letters of the Hebrew alphabet) which are in fact an active reflection of each of the ten stages.

<u>Sephiroth</u>	<u>Letters</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
1. Kether	K-Th-R	Crown
2. Chokmah	Ch-K-M-H	Wisdom
3. Binah	B-I-N-H	Understanding
4. Chesed	Ch-S-D	Mercy
5. Geburah	G-B-U-R-H	Severity & Strength
6. Tiphareth	Th-Ph-A-R-Th	Beauty
7. Netzach	N-Ts-Ch	Victory
8. Hod	H-O-D	Glory
9. Yesod	Y-S-O-D	Foundation
10. Malkuth	M-L-K-U-Th	Kingdom

The entire concept of these ten stages of learning is the use of polarity in teaching. Each Sephiroth, when placed on the Tree of Life is in juxtaposition so that each is an exact counter-balance of the other. The Kabbalah has been described as a ladder of lights for it not only shows formation (descent into matter) but also shows how one can use it for ascent as well (through ritual, prayer and meditation) which theoretically takes us back to the pure state of both mind and body that is epitomised by Kether, the first Sephira which is sometimes called the godhead or true self.

While in its infancy the Kabbalah was considered as an obscure or sectarian aspect of the Hebrew religion but under the process of time it diverted into a form of mysticism that held itself aloof from the main stream of western thought.

The modern concept of visualisation of the Tree of Life (which today is considered indistinct from the Kabbalah itself) is to assume that it has three pillars. The left hand side is the pillar of Severity, the middle is the neutral or Middle Pillar while the right hand side is the pillar of Mercy. By using this method one can understand the use of polarity applied to the Tree of Life.

To state outright that inherent in each individual there is a Kabbalistic Tree of Life (on the lines of the DNA double helix) would be something of a gross misconception. What happens, is that through study and meditation one applies certain potencies of the Sephiroth and gradually the psyche orientates to a system of growth along Kabbalistic lines. Carl Jung commented that when studying the ancient science of alchemy, as the practical and theoretical alchemical knowledge was applied the psyche began to change so that it was brought in line with the experiments being performed. The same psychological aspects could be applied to Kabbalistic studies as well. As the aspiring student starts to meditate and experience the energies of the Sephiroth (whether it be in daily life or through meditation) he finds that they become real potencies of forces that start to act up when the psyche starts to regroup its component parts that are scattered throughout the subconscious, into cells that start to resemble the Sephiroth. Most of the experiences of these Kabbalistic energies will be both of ascent and descent with the reception of the energies flowing down from Kether and their return through active effort and ritual work.

Another simplified explanation of Kabbalistic meditation is that the glyph of the Tree of Life becomes so implanted in the mind of the devotee, that it becomes for all intent and purposes a collection of artificial archetypes that tidy up the relative aspects of the subconscious to more easily accessible areas that the individual can relate to within the confines of the self.

The classification of the Kabbalah can be divided into four main general areas:

PRACTICAL KABBALAH = Practical and Ceremonial Magic, Divination and Alchemy.

LITERAL KABBALAH = Gematria - Numerical value of words and letters.

Notorion - Anagrams.

Temurah - Permutation of letters.

Tarot - Study of universal archetypes.

UNWRITTEN KABBALAH = Oral teachings.

DOGMATIC KABBALAH = Study of Kabbalistic doctrines and texts.

Because the essence of Kabbalistic teaching was oral tradition it is difficult to pinpoint its exact origin but one of the first written Kabbalistic texts is the book Sepher Yetzirah. Its date in manuscript form is said to be around the 10th century but

its roots in oral form were possibly around 100 A.D., though some esoteric scholars have firmly entrenched it in the Old Testament at the time of Moses and were thought to be part of the original laws handed down by him. Other branches of Kabbalistic scholars have considered that its origins were from Abraham the Patriarch. When studying some of the early Rabbinical literatures there is little doubt that the Kabbalah (in the form of the Sepher Yetzirah) is a book of theology very distinct from the Mishnah and Gemara which are of course the basis of the Talmud.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Sepher Yetzirah and Kabbalistic theology is the grammatical use of the Hebrew language which gives it a clear anchor to planetary and other astrological associations. This stands out with the association to the three mother letters of Aleph, Mem and Shin to the three elements, with the 7 double letters to the planets, and the 12 simple letters to the Zodiac signs. Hebrew scholars of the last century, such as Wyn Wescott, have confirmed that the Sepher Yetzirah, though not widely known is mentioned in the Talmud of Jerusalem and of Babylon.

Another Rabbinical book called the Bahir also came into prominence around the 12th century though modern exponents of this remarkable piece of literature place its date in manuscript form around the 6th century A.D. Though not considered by some scholars as a strict Kabbalistic text there is no doubt that there are parts of it that are Kabbalistic in concept, as the Sephiroth are clearly mentioned and commented on, and as such,

has been included in the Kabbalistic literature category.

Without doubt the main piece of Kabbalistic literature is the Zohar, or Book of Splendour. It first came into general notice around 1290 when it was published by Moses de Leon. A fierce controversy has raged ever since to the book's original authorship which de Leon claimed to have been copied from an old text said to have been written by Simeon Be Jacobi who lived in the 2nd century A.D. under the reign of the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antonitus. It is doubtful that the entire Zohar can be attributed to his authorship as clearly other books have been added to the body of the original text that relate to a later period of philosophical thought.

The Zohar comprises of the following books:

1. Tosephtha & Mathanithan - Small additional pieces
2. Hecaloth - The Mansion or Palaces of light
3. Sithre Torah - Mysteries of the Torah
4. Midrash Ha Neelan - Mysteries of Midrash
5. Raja Mehemna - Faithfull Shepherd
6. Raze Derazin - Secret of Secrets
7. Saba Demishpatim - Discourse of the age of Mishpatim
8. Siphra Detzniutha - Book of Secrets or Mysteries
9. Idra Rabba - The Greater Assembly
10. Yenuka - Discourse of the Young Man
11. Idra Sutra - Lesser Assembly
12. Idra Di Be Mashkana - Assembly before a lecture on Torah

13. Rev Methivtha - Academy Head
14. Kav Ha Middah - Standard of Measure
15. Sithre Othioth - Secret of Letters
16. Midrash Ha Neelam Midrash Ruth - On the Book of Ruth
17. Tikkune Zohar - New Supplements of the Zohar
18. Sifra Di Tseniutha - Book of Concealment
19. Untitled Commentary on the Song of Solomon

Other Kabbalistic texts of note include the Commentary on the Ten Sephiroth by Rabbi Azariel ben Menachem (in the year 1200), a former student of the noted Kabbalist Isaac the Blind (1190-1210), father of the Gerona School of Kabbalism. The Treatise on the Emanation by Isaac Nasir, The Gate of Heaven by Jacob ben Sheshet, The Alphabet by Rabbi Akiba, The Garden of Pomegranates by Moses Cordovra (1591) are just some of the note worthy Kabbalistic texts of interest but at this stage in the course most of these and other published earlier Kabbalistic literature would be meaningless to the reader save that in the knowledge that the rhetoric of the Kabbalah is very long and well documented.

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# THE KABBALAH ON THE TREE OF LIFE

